

PREFACE

This report is designed to satisfy the statutory requirements of § 305(b) of the federal Water Pollution Control Act [33 U.S.C. 1288], commonly known as the Clean Water Act (CWA). It also serves as a source of basic information on water quality and water pollution control programs in New Mexico. As a result, this report is not written solely for the United States Congress or the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The intended audience also includes the general public, interest groups, consultants, state legislators, governmental agencies at State, local, and federal levels, as well as universities and other educational entities.

Care has been taken to distinguish between State and federal agencies, statutes, regulations, and programs. With regard to the distinction between State and federal aspects of water pollution control, federal aspects of water quality management are consistently identified only when required by the context.

Legal Requirements

CWA § 305(b) requires that each State submit a biennial report to the United States Congress through the EPA. The report is to include the following:

- an assessment of water quality;
- an analysis of the extent to which surface waters provide for protection and propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife and recreation in and on the water;
- an overview of progress in water pollution control and recommendations for further action;
- an estimate of the environmental, social, and economic impacts of restoring and maintaining the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of waters within the State; and
- a description of the nature of nonpoint source pollution and of programs for nonpoint source pollution control.

As in the past, EPA has issued guidance to interpret the requirements of § 305(b). This guidance specifies the types of water quality information that should be used to provide a comprehensive, statewide description of water quality and at the same time allow EPA to evaluate water quality management programs in New Mexico with emphasis on the State role.

The three parts of the report begin with the *Executive Summary* and *Recommendations*. The executive summary provides basic

information on water quality and water pollution control programs and highlights major points made in the report. The recommendations from the Water Quality Control Commission are for both the United States Congress and EPA and address both ground and surface water quality management.

Part II, *Surface and Ground Water Quality*, introduces the reader to the physical description of the State of New Mexico with a basin-by-basin narrative which highlights current pollution problem areas and efforts to remediate them. This part of the report also outlines the State's assessments of both its ground and surface water resources.

The final part of this report, *Water Quality Management*, details the work of many of the State's agencies entrusted with protecting New Mexico's water resources. Part III also includes narratives submitted by several federal and local agencies whose legislative obligations require them to manage portions of the State's waters.

Information Used

This report generally deals with the period from January 1996 through December 1998.